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TAGS: [KIRF](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RAISES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CASES WITH FM
ABOUL GHEIT

REF: A. CAIRO 3351

[1](#)B. CAIRO 3256
[1](#)C. CAIRO 3334

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Among the issues the Ambassador raised in a December 3 meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit (see septel) were two recent religious freedom cases: the November 10 arrest of three members of the Middle East Christians Association (MECA) (refs A and B); and the fraud conviction of Shadia Nagui Ibrahim (ref C). Aboul Gheit said he was not familiar with either case, but his Chief of Cabinet, Deputy Foreign Minister Wafaa Bassim, who also attended the meeting, was. On the MECA case, she said that because the case is in the hands of the judiciary, the GoE could not intervene. On the Shadia Ibrahim case, Bassim said that she understood the case to be about fraud, not religious identity or discrimination. Aboul Gheit asked that we work with his staff to follow-up.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Following the Ambassador's meeting with Aboul Gheit, we contacted the MFA's Deputy Assistant Minister for Human Rights Wael Aboulmaged. He told us that after the Ambassador's meeting with the Foreign Minister, he received two telephone calls about the cases from the Foreign Minister's office. He said he was making all appropriate inquiries but had not yet received the information he had requested. We will continue to follow-up and report developments in both cases.
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